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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Letter dated 22 March 1996 from the Permanent Representatives of Azerbaijan and Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Declaration on Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Caucasus Region signed by the President of Georgia, H.E. Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze and the President of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Heydar Aliyev, at Tbilisi on 8 March 1996.

We should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 81 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Eldar G. KOULIEV
Permanent Representative
of Azerbaijan to the
United Nations

(Signed) Peter P. CHKHEIDZE
Permanent Representative
of Georgia to the
United Nations

* A/51/50.

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ANNEX

[Original: Russian]

Declaration on Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Caucasus Region, signed by the President of Georgia and the President of Azerbaijan at Tbilisi on 8 March 1996

The last decade of the twentieth century has been marked by fundamental changes in international relations. Historic steps have resulted in a major shift from the state of cold war to the wide-ranging affirmation of the principles of democracy and the recognition that there is no alternative to cooperation in the interests of universal peace and international security.

The legacy of a totalitarian regime has transformed the region into an arena of bitter confrontation and aggressive separatism and nationalism, which have led to armed conflicts. The death of innocent people, ethnic cleansing, the transformation of hundreds of thousands of citizens into refugees in their native land, the widespread destruction of valuables and property, and economic paralysis are the onerous consequences of these conflicts. Such destabilization contains a dangerous destructive force. Further escalation may lead to a large-scale catastrophe.

At the same time, the traditions of tolerance and mutual assistance are strong in the Caucasus. For centuries, in times of misfortune, people were always prepared to help each other, regardless of ethnic or religious differences.

From the point of view of natural and human resources, the Caucasus is one of the richest regions of the world. The normalization of the political situation, the restoration of mutual trust and the creation of viable mechanisms for ensuring lasting peace, stability and security are essential if these riches are to be used with maximum effectiveness for the benefit of all the peoples and all inhabitants of our region, and the advantageous transport and geographical conditions are to be fully exploited.

The States Parties to this Declaration, expressing their firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, desiring to preserve and strengthen the traditionally close and friendly ties and good-neighbourly relations in the region, declare that they shall build their mutual relations on the basis of:

Commitment to the common goals of strengthening peace, stability and security in the region;

The inviolability of internationally recognized borders and the inadmissibility of any encroachments upon them;

Consistent observance of and respect for the principles of sovereignty, the rejection of the use of force or the threat of its use, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs;

Commitment to the peaceful settlement of all disputes and armed conflicts in the territory of the States of the region on the basis of the strict and unconditional observance of territorial integrity and the inviolability of State borders;

Commitment not to create or support separatist movements or separatist regimes, and rejection of the methods and practice of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations;

Recognition of the need to develop mutually advantageous and equitable bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region and the European Union;

Gradual strengthening of ties between the countries of the region and the vast area of cooperation in Europe and the step-by-step, consistent integration into an open international system, which is an essential condition for economic prosperity and the creation of a society based on justice and democracy.

The realization of these purposes and principles require the concerted efforts of all interested States and international organizations. In order to establish peace, stability, confidence and security in the region, it is necessary to:

1. Restore the sovereignty of States within their internationally recognized borders, ensure the territorial integrity of States, and guarantee the safe return of refugees to their homes;

2. Respect, at all times and everywhere, for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of ethnic minorities;

3. Cooperate in the development of transport and other communications and ensure their security;

4. Ensure all-round cooperation in the protection of the unique natural heritage of the Caucasus, eliminate man-made damage and the consequences of natural disasters and armed conflicts and develop international tourism;

5. Promote ethnic and religious tolerance, a careful and respectful attitude towards the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Caucasus, which is in this respect one of the richest areas in the world;

6. Actively support international projects and attract and encourage foreign investment.

The goals and objectives formulated in this Declaration can be achieved with the unconditional commitment of all States of the region to all the interrelated universal principles listed above.

This Declaration is open for signature by all interested States and international organizations that accept the provisions contained in it.

DONE at Tbilisi on 8 March 1996, in the Georgian, Azerbaijani and Russian languages, all three texts being equally authentic.

For Georgia:

(Signed) E. SHEVARDNADZE
President of Georgia

For the Azerbaijani Republic:

(Signed) H. ALIYEV
President of the Azerbaijani Republic